



25th of the Day of the African Child

14- 15 June, 2015. Soweto, South Africa

25 years after the adoption of the African children's charter: accelerating our collective efforts to end child marriage in Africa.

Communication & Advocacy Guide



ACRWC^{at}**25**
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
1990 - 2015
Years

1. BACKGROUND

This year, the continental commemoration of the DAC will be held in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, under the theme, “25 Years after the Adoption of the African Children’s Charter: Accelerating our Collective Efforts to End Child Marriage in Africa.” The event will bring together those affected by and working to end child marriage such as community leaders, traditional, religious leaders, girls affected by child marriage and key stakeholders.

The 2015 continental commemoration in Soweto is symbolic for the African Union, as it highlights the historical 1976 uprising in Soweto, when a protest by school children in South Africa against apartheid–inspired education resulted in the public killing of these unarmed young protesters by police officials.

The DAC 2015 event will begin with a children’s consultation on the 14th of June and will witness the participation of children representatives across the continent. The 15th of June will feature, among other activities, an intergenerational dialogue of stakeholders and children.

The celebrations will feature experience sharing and related activities from community leaders, traditional, religious leaders, and children particularly girls affected by child marriage and youth advocating against child marriage. The event will also showcase youth organizations and initiatives that are particularly active in promoting the elimination of child marriage.

2. SUGGESTED KEY MESSAGES

1. Child marriage denies a staggering number of girls and an important number of boys the right to live healthy, fulfilling lives. When married as children girls are exposed to greater health risks as well as risks of violence. Without intensive and sustained action now from all parts of society, hundreds of millions more girls will suffer profound, permanent, and utterly un-necessary harm.

2. A girl who is not married as a child is likely to have completed more schooling, to experience greater peace and less violence in her husband’s household and to be at lower risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections. She will have children when she is physically and psychologically more prepared, and is far less likely to suffer negative consequences – including death - due to during pregnancy and childbirth than women who give birth when they are themselves children.

3. The numbers are staggering and could increase dramatically because of demographic growth. Over 700 million women were married as children worldwide. If we sustain the same level of progress that we have seen in the past 30 years, 470 million girls would not become child brides between today and 2050. But because of population growth, the actual number of girls affected will remain at least as high as they are today.

4. Change is happening and needs to be scaled up dramatically. The movement towards ending child marriage is being fuelled at multiple levels by young people themselves, parents, elders, religious figures and national leaders. Young people, like their parents and grandparents, are keen to strengthen families and communities. Platforms to explore and pursue ways to do this, including the agreement to delay marriage, can serve to make more visible and encourage the positive social change.

5. National policies, services, legislation must work with communities to take the most promising efforts to scale. Since being in school helps a girl to be seen as a child, and not ready to be married efforts need to focus on removing the economic and other barriers that keep the hardest to reach girls out of classrooms. Most girls and families already aspire to complete schooling of quality rather than marry early, but quality education is least accessible to the very girls who are most likely to be married as children.

3. DAC HASTAGS

During the DAC, a number of hastags will be in use.

#EndChildMarriageNow, #ACRWC25, #DAC2015

1. An estimated 58 million young women in developing countries have been married before their 18th birthday. **#EndChildMarriageNow**

2. At present trend, by 2020, 143 million girls would be married before 18, an alarming average of 14.2 million girls every single year. **#EndChildMarriageNow #DAC2015**

3. 1 in 3 girls is married by age 18; 1 in 9 is married by 15; 1 in 3 young women was married before the age of 18. **#EndChildMarriageNow #ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

4. Poverty is a key driver of child marriage. Countries with high prevalent rates of child marriage tend to have low GDP **#DAC2015**

5. Child pregnancy is a leading cause of maternal mortality for girls

aged 15-19. To reduce maternal death we must **#EndChildMarriageNow**

6. Child marriage violates human rights, it stops development of girls, results to early pregnancy & social isolation **#DAC2015**

7. Child marriage reinforces cycle of poverty for the female child as girls hardly go to school or get vocational training as a result **#DAC2015**

8. Several AU legal and policy frameworks directly support the eradication of child marriage **#ACRWC25 #EndChildMarriageNow**

9. Girls living in low income households are more exposed to being married off early than girls in higher income households. **#DAC2015**

10. Child marriage leads to psychosocial & emotional trauma due to forced sexual relations and loss of freedom. **#EndChildMarriageNow #DAC2015**

11. Due to the unequal power and lack of education, young women can't negotiate safe sex with their husbands, putting them at risk **#ACRWC25**

12. Women who are married before the age of 18 have more children and most times can't determine the number of kids they want **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

13. Infants born to adolescent mothers are 60% more likely to die in their 1st year, and are more likely to be malnourished. **#EndChildMarriageNow**

14. Early marriages prevent girls from going to school and receiving elementary and secondary education **#EndChildMarriageNow #ACRWC25**

15. The lack of education contributes to girl's isolation, high infant mortality and economic dependency. **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

16. Women who remain in school receiving education are less likely to be married as children **#EndChildMarriageNow**

17. Educated women tend to have fewer children and healthier families, which contributes to improved child and maternal health **#ACRWC25**

18. Education for girls is seen as a preventive weapon against HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality **#DAC2015 #ACRWC25**

19. A legislative framework must be in place to support the behavioral

change necessary for the eradication of child marriage **#EndChildMarriageNow**

20. National legislation should be revised in order to effectively criminalize child marriage, and guarantee its enforcement **#EndChildMarriageNow**

21. It's important to get professional training for women, in order for them to acquire skills to guarantee their livelihood **#EndChildMarriageNow**

22. Govts. should work with chiefs to sensitize communities on importance of sending kids to school, with an emphasis on the girl child. **#DAC2015**

23. Govts should work on providing free universal access to primary education especially in rural areas. **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

24. Member States and concerned groups should work collaboratively in combating the malicious act of child marriage. **#EndChildMarriageNow**

25. Ethiopia, Chad, DRC, Madagascar and Niger have launched the Campaign to end child marriage **#EndChildMarriageNow #DAC2015**

26. The AU launched a continental campaign to end child marriage as an unjust act, and encouraged Govts to do same **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

27. Child marriage is rooted in gender inequality & poverty. It is most common in rural areas where prospects for girls can be limited **#ACRWC25**

28. Just imagine! More than half of the girls in Mali, Mozambique and Niger are married before age 18 **#EndChildMarriageNow #ACRWC25**

29. In Mozambique 60% of girls with no education are married by 18, compared to 10% of girls with secondary school. **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

30. Poor families marry off young daughters to reduce the number of children they need to feed, clothe and educate. **#DAC2015 #EndChildMarriageNow**

31. Some societies wrongly believe that child marriage will protect young girls from sexual attacks and violence **#EndChildMarriageNow #DAC2015**

32. The **#ACRWC25** encourages Govts to take measures to eliminate harmful cultural practices affecting children **#ACRWC25 #DAC2015**

33. Educating adolescent girls is a major step in reducing child marriage in African countries. **#EndChildMarriageNow #DAC2015**

5. DAC VIDEO SCREENING AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

As part of the DAC commemoration, videos on child marriage will be screened on both the children's pre-DAC session on 14 June 2015, as well as during the main DAC commemoration on 15 June 2015. A DAC video will later be produced showing highlights of the DAC events on 14 and 15 June in Soweto. The video will be disseminated widely.

Join the Advocacy on our Social Media:

#EndChildMarriageNow, #ACRWC25, #DAC2015



/AfricanUnionCommission

/acerwc

/OurGirlsAfrika

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